

# **BLM - Vale District**

Baker, Jordan, and Malheur Resource Areas  
Project and Planning Focus-  
Spring 1999

## ***Introduction***

This bulletin is the latest in an on-going dialogue between you and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Vale District office. We hope that this Project and Planning focus will increase your awareness of BLM activities and your opportunities to discuss these activities with us. Through this bulletin we hope to continue our ongoing relationship with you. We will publish this bulletin each year to provide updates on our progress. This edition is also posted on our world wide web site ([www.or.blm.gov/vale](http://www.or.blm.gov/vale)).

## ***Understanding NEPA***

What is NEPA? NEPA is the National Environmental Policy Act. When we propose management actions that might affect the quality of the environment, the district uses an interdisciplinary approach to develop alternative proposals, including the proposed action, and to provide environmental analysis (EA) of possible effects of proposed actions. Another important aspect of NEPA is its requirement for public involvement in the planning process.

## ***Categorical Exclusions (CE)***

Under NEPA some proposed actions do not require EAs. These are called categorical exclusions (CE). These actions do not individually or cumulatively have significant environmental effects and may be excluded from environmental analysis if they qualify under BLM or Department of the Interior guidelines.

## ***Environmental Assessments (EA)***

Some proposed actions require an Environmental Assessment. These are management actions that are not exempted as categorical exclusions and are not covered under an existing NEPA document such as an EA or EIS.

When the EA is completed it is determined whether the proposed action will significantly affect the quality of the environment. If impacts are determined to be significant, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be prepared. If impacts are determined to be insignificant, a Finding Of No Significant Impact (FONSI) will be prepared.

## ***Environmental Impact Statements (EIS)***

Major federal actions significantly affecting the environment require an EIS. The analysis and resulting document describes an array of management alternatives including the preferred alternative, the environmental impacts of implementing the alternatives, adverse environmental effects that cannot be avoided if the proposed action is implemented.

## ***How Can I be Involved?***

You can let us know your views and concerns as comments on completed EAs and EISs during the formal comment periods. Resource management within the BLM and other government agencies is process oriented. In order to influence the decision, you must be a part of the process, and the earlier in the process the better. For many of the EAs, this project bulletin is the only scoping notice you will receive prior to the notice of availability of the EA for public review. If you wish to comment on the proposed projects in the early planning stages, you should contact the designated project coordinator.

The following EA's are for projects that are completed or expected to be completed in fiscal year 1999. A notice is published in local newspapers when each EA is available for review by the public and a date when the comment period ends. A notice will be published in the Baker City Herald or La Grande Observer for EAs completed in the Baker Resource Area, and the Ontario Argus Observer paper for EAs done in the Malheur and Jordan Resource Areas. If you are interested in receiving a copy of an EA or want to get involved in the NEPA process, please contact the designated project coordinator at one of the addresses/phone numbers listed below:

### **BLM Vale District**

100 Oregon Street  
Vale, Oregon 97918  
(541) 473-3144  
7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (MST or MDT)  
Monday through Friday

### **Baker Resource Office**

3165 10<sup>th</sup> Street  
Baker City, Oregon 97814  
(541) 523-1256  
7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (PST pr PDT)  
Monday through Friday

*An update on the status of these EAs will appear in the next Project and Planning Focus.*

## **Malheur Resource Area**

### **Environmental Assessments Planned for 1999**

Name: Willow Creek Canal Fence

Contact: Connie Jensen, Rangeland Management Specialist

Location: 5 miles north of Vale

Description: Construct 2.25 miles of fence to control livestock movement.

Target Date: Spring 99

Name: Stockade Butte Electric Fence

Contact: Connie Jensen, Rangeland Management Specialist

Location: Stockade Butte, T.26S., R.38E. Sec.28

Description: Construct 5 miles of temporary electric fence to protect an area burned by wildfire

Target Date: Spring 99

Name: Bully Creek Landscape Area Project

Contact: Barb Masinton, Natural Resource Specialist

Location: Bully Creek Geographic Area encompassing 265,000 acres of public land west of Vale, Oregon

Description: Resource assessment and management plan for the Bully Creek Geographic Area.

Will include projects and management prescriptions to meet resource objectives within the landscape area.

Target Date: Summer 99

Name: Jordan Craters Road, Community Gravel Pits

Contact: Bill Holsheimer, Geologist

Location: Jordan Craters/Birch Creek Road

Description: Development of community gravel pits for road maintenance

Target Date: Spring 99

Name: Snake River Sportsman Shooting Range patent

Contact: Jon Freeman, Realty Specialist

Location: 3 miles south of Vale, Oregon

Description: Sale of leased shooting range

Target Date: Spring 99

Name: Malheur Assembled Land Exchange

Contact: Jon Freeman, Realty Specialist

Location: Malheur County

Description: Land exchange to consolidate ownership of scattered tracts

Target Date: 1999

Name: North Fork Malheur River Land Exchange

Contact: Jon Freeman, Realty Specialist

Location: North Fork Malheur River, T17S, 18S, R36 E  
Description: Land exchange to consolidate land ownership  
Target Date: 1999

Name: Monument Peak Communication Site Plan  
Contact: Sheldon Saxton, Realty Specialist  
Location: Monument Peak, 15 miles west of Vale, Oregon  
Description: Management Plan to guide use and development of existing communication site.  
Target Date: Spring 99

### **FY 98 EA Status Update**

Top Spray Gap Fence : EA/Decision record completed 7/24/98 for construction of gap fencing.

Lava Ridge Cooperative Management Plan: Will be incorporated into Bully Creek Landscape Area Management Project.

North Fork Riparian Fence: EA/Decision record completed 2/25/99 for fence construction for 2.5 miles of fence.

Brian Creek Allotment Management Plan revision: Will be incorporated into Bully Creek Landscape Area Management Project

JB White Fence: Carry over to 99

Hoodoo Reservoir Enclosure: EA/Decision record completed 5/22/98 for enclosure construction

Rail Canyon Prescribed Burn: EA/Decision record completed 8/21/98 for prescribed burn

Alkali Flat Rehabilitation Project: EA/Decision record completed 9/10/98 for range rehabilitation project.

South Tub Mountain Emergency Fire Rehabilitation: EA/Decision record completed 8/21/98 for emergency fire rehabilitation project.

Owyhee Powerline Reconstruction: EA/Decision record completed 10/4/98 for powerline reconstruction.

# **BAKER RESOURCE AREA**

## **Environmental Assessments Planned for 1999**

Name: R/W to Install River Monitoring Site (OR-035-99-01)

Contact: Steve Davidson, Realty Specialist

Location: T11S, R42E, Sec.26, in Burnt River Canyon, near Durkee

Description: Provide R/W for Burnt River Irrigation District to install monitoring device in Burnt River. R/W will consist of locating pipe and posts on land in order to insert device into river.

Target Date: Late spring, 1999

Name: Dry Gulch Exclosure/Modification and Stock Pond Construction (OR-035-99-03)

Contact: Clair Button, Botanist; Greg Miller, Wildlife Biologist

Location: T9S, R45E, Sec.5, W1/2E1/2

Description: Modify and extend exclosure fence; build two stock ponds.

Target Date: Summer 1999.

Name: Lime Hill Communication Site Plan (OR-035-99-04)

Contact: Steve Davidson, Realty Specialist

Location: T13S, R45E, Sec 18/19

Description: Implementation of plan to manage multiple communication sites on Lime Hill.

Target Date: Fall 1999

Name: Mud Creek Road Right-of-Way (OR-035-99-05)

Contact: Steve Davidson, Realty Specialist

Location: T5N, R42E, Sec. 20, E1/2NW, NESW

Description: R/W for use, maintenance, and improvement of road and new bridge construction.

Target Date: Fall 1999

Name: City of Irrigon R & PP Conveyance (OR-035-99-06)

Contact: Steve Davidson, Realty Specialist

Location: Irrigon, OR (along the Columbia River)

Description: Under the Recreation and Public Purposes Act, convey approximately 15 acres to the city for waste-water treatment plant.

Target Date: Summer 1999

Name: Pedro Mtn Roads Restoration (OR-035-99-07)

Contact: Steve Davidson, Realty Specialist

Location: T13S, R42E

Description: Restore dirt roads constructed in trespass.

Target Date: Fall 1999

Name: Waterspout Allotment Fence Gap Closure (OR-035-99-08)

Contact: John Denney, Natural Resources Specialist

Location: T9S, R42E, Sec. 3 NW1/4

Description: Correct slow erosion undermining fence.

Target Date: Fall 1999

Name: Lookout Mtn. Forest Health Project (OR-035-99-09)

Contact: Joanne Britton, Environmental Coordinator, Dick Watson, Forester

Location: T11S, R45E, Big Lookout Mtn.

Description: Commercial and precommercial thin, manage wood- lands and aspen, restore riparian areas; ecosystem health management.

Target Date: Fall 1999

Name: Vale District Integrated Noxious Weed Control Program

Contact: Mike Woods, District Weed Team

Location: District wide

Description: Integrated noxious weed control.

Target Date: June, 1999

### **FY 98 EA Status Update**

Brush Removal and Spot Seeding, McCann Spring (carry over--96-01)

City of Hermiston Water Reservoir Right-of-Way: EA completed, decision signed 5/29/98. Adds 3-million-gallon water reservoir capacity for the City of Hermiston.

Lime Hill Area Coordinated Activity Plan (ACEC) (carry over--97-02)

Minam Trailer Relocation completed, decision signed 8/25/98. Moves public information trailer to a more suitable site on Oregon Parks and Recreation land.

Northeast Oregon Assembled Land Exchange EIS (NOALE) (carry over; multiple District process)

Oregon Trail Vegetation Management Plan (carry over; under Natl. OR Trail Interpretive Center)

Summit Creek, Immigrant Gulch, Bear Gulch, and Foster Gulch Reservoirs; Foster Gulch Spring, Barnard Creek Reservoir (carry over--94-17)

Rattlesnake Forest Health project, nearly complete; decision due May 1999

Second Creek Range Improvement Projects (carry over 97-13)

Snake River Quarry, nearly complete (carry over)

# **JORDAN RESOURCE AREA**

## **Environmental Assessments Planned for 1999**

Name: Antelope Pipeline Cantor Pit  
Contact: Tom Hilken, Rangeland Specialist  
Location: Antelope Allotment  
Description: Construct pipeline from Cantor Pit to Cantor Pasture.  
Target Date: September, 1999

Name: Dry Creek Fences and Pipeline Extension  
Contact: Tom Hilken, Rangeland Specialist  
Location: Arock Allotment  
Description: Fence and pipeline extension  
Target Date: September, 1999

Name: Castro Spring Wetland and Coburn Creek Riparian Fence  
Contact: Tom Hilken, Rangeland Specialist  
Location: Willow Creek Allotment  
Description: Exclosure and riparian pasture fence.  
Target Date: September, 1999

Name: Whitehorse Butte Well  
Contact: Tom Hilken, Rangeland Specialist  
Location: Whitehorse Allotment  
Description: Drill well.  
Target Date: September, 1999

Name: Cowgill Prescribed Burn  
Contact: Tom Hilken, Rangeland Specialist  
Location: East Cow Creek Allotment  
Description: Prescribe burn.  
Target Date: September, 1999

Name: Willow Creek Dike and Road Realignment  
Contact: Cynthia Tait, Fish Biologist  
Location: Whitehorse Butte Allotment  
Description: Construct dike to prevent stream capture by road; repair road.  
Target Date: February, 1999

Name: Birch Creek Fuel Tank Relocation and Replacement  
Contact: Jeff Wilbanks, Outdoor Recreation Planner  
Location: Birch Creek Historic Ranch  
Description: Replace and relocate diesel/gas fuel tanks.  
Target Date: March, 1999.

Name: McDermitt Complex Undesirable Species Control  
Contact: J.R. Epps, Rangeland Specialist  
Location: 15 Mile, Sherburn, Albisu, 10 Mile, and Louse Canyon Allotments  
Description: Prescribe burn, herbicide application and seeding.  
Target date: September, 1999.

Name: Southern Trout Creek Habitat Maintenance  
Contact: J.R. Epps, Rangeland Specialist  
Location: Whitehorse Butte, McCormick and 15 Mile Allotments  
Description: Prescribe burn for fire reintroduction.  
Target date: September, 1999.

Name: Macaroni Spring  
Contact: Tom Forre, Rangeland Specialist  
Location: Whitehorse Butte  
Description: Fence off spring and relocate trough away from riparian area.  
Target Date: September, 1999

Name: Sand Springs Wild Horse Herd Management Area Gathering  
Contact: Jim Johnson, Rangeland Specialist  
Location: Saddle Butte Allotment  
Description: Gather wild horses.  
Target Date: September, 1999

### **FY 98 EA Status Update**

Antelope Pipeline Cantor Pit: Construct pipeline from Cantor Pit to Cantor Pasture. Carried-over to FY99 with new target date of 9/99.

Castro Pipeline Extension: Construct pipeline extension from Castro Pipeline into Rim Basin. Canceled.

Parsnip Spring: Develop spring with head box and trough. Canceled.

Birch Creek Irrigation Pipe Replacement and Diesel/Gas Tank Pads: Replace existing sixty foot length of irrigation pipe. Install two concrete pads for double walled fuel tanks. Irrigation pipe replacement and diesel/gas tank pads projects were split-out. Irrigation pipe replacement EA and project completed. Diesel/gas tank pads EA initiated.

Jordan Craters Barriers and Sign Installation: Install vehicle barriers, bulletin board and information signs. On-hold due to higher priorities.

Cow Lakes Recreation Site Improvements: Provide concrete boat ramp, physically challenged accessible toilet, trees, water system, and gravel camp sites.



Macaroni Spring: Fence off spring and relocate trough away from riparian area. Carried-over to FY99 with new target date of 9/99.

Lower Boney Pipeline: Construct pipeline and pipeline extension. Completed.

Corbin Creek Well Development: Construct pipeline from well to storage tank and to Crows Nest Pipeline. Carried-over to FY99 with new target date of 9/99.

Sand Springs Wild Horse Herd Management Area Gathering: Gather wild horses. Carried-over to FY99 with new target date of 9/99.